



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**WORK STRESS PATTERNS,
SOURCES AND COPING STRATEGIES: A STUDY
OF MALAYSIAN AND JORDANIAN CUSTOMS EMPLOYEES**

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GSM 2002 3

**WORK STRESS PATTERNS, SOURCES AND COPING STRATEGIES: A
STUDY OF MALAYSIAN AND JORDANIAN CUSTOMS EMPLOYEES**

By

BELAL BARHEM

**Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the Graduate School of Management
Universiti Putra Malaysia**

May 2002



**DEDICATED
TO
MY BELOVED mother
AND**

***For those who sacrificed their lives, time, effort, and money to protect the Islamic
rights, equity, fairness, and human being from its enemy on every piece of land on this
world***

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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STUDY OF MALAYSIAN AND JORDANIAN CUSTOMS EMPLOYEES**

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May 2002

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There have been many studies on work stress, and many descriptions of it. The multidimensionality of stress is evidenced by the fact that it takes different forms and occurs in different fields. This study aimed to evaluate the levels and major sources of work stress that afflict two countries customs employees (Malaysian and Jordanian), and the possible strategies to cope with the stress. It also aimed to investigate the Malaysian and Jordanian customs employees on their levels and sources of work stress, and their coping strategies used. Finally, it sought to rank the sources of work stress and coping strategies in their relationships to personal feelings.

The study comprised of 216 respondents from the Malaysian customs and 248 respondents from the Jordanian customs. Path analysis, multiple stepwise regression and correlation analysis were the major statistical tools used to analyse the data.

The major findings of the study were that: -

- a) Both the Malaysian and Jordanian customs suffered from high work stress.
- b) Role ambiguity was the most potent cause of both medium and high-level stress in the Jordanians. The major causes for the Malaysians were role overload-qualitative for medium level stress and role ambiguity for high level stress.
- c) Flexibility was the major coping strategy against both medium and high stress by the Jordanians. The Malaysians used active & productive against medium level stress and acceptance of others values against high-level stress.

In addition, the study clarified the relationships between the dependent and independent variables used in the model. Significant relationships were found for sources of work stress with the levels of work stress and coping strategies in both countries. The relationships between personal differences and sources of work stress were weak, although significant, in both countries, while the relationships between personal difference on one side, and the levels of work stress and coping strategies on the other were not significant in the Jordanian case. In the Malaysian case, the relationship between personal differences and level of work stress and coping strategies were significant.

The relationships between levels of work stress and coping strategies were not significant in the Jordanian case. But significant for the Malaysians. The relationships between the levels and sources of work stress were significant for both countries. In addition, the relationships between sources of work stress and coping strategies were

significant for both countries. The implications of the findings and recommendations for future research are discussed. The two departments need to develop and improve some regulations, training programs, and other things such as the communication channels.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**CORAK, SUMBER DAN STRATEGI MENANGANI TEKANAN KERJA: SATU
KAJIAN PEKERJA KASTAM DI MALAYSIA DAN JORDAN**

Oleh

BELAL BARHEM

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Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menilai tahap dan punca-punca utama berlakunya tekanan di tempat kerja di kalangan kakitangan Kastam Malaysia dan Jordan serta apakah strategi yang boleh digunakan untuk menyelesaikan masalah tersebut. Kajian ini juga adalah untuk membuat perbandingan di antara kakitangan Kastam Malaysia dan Jordan dari segi tahap tekanan, punca tekanan dan strategi yang diambil bagi mengatasi masalah tekanan di tempat kerja. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji punca-punca tekanan dan strategi penyelesaian masalah mengikut keutamaan yang berhubungkait dengan perasaan seseorang. Kajian ini adalah dari 216 responden dari kakitangan Kastam Malaysia dan 248 responden terdiri dari kakitangan Kastam Jordan. Analisa laluan (path analysis), regresi berperingkat (stepwise regression) dan analisa korelasi adalah di antara alat statistik utama yang digunakan dalam menganalisa data.

Penemuan-penemuan dari kajian ini adalah seperti berikut:-

- a) Kedua-dua kastam Malaysia dan Jordan mengalami tekanan yang tinggi di tempat kerja.
- b) Ketidakjelasan tugas adalah punca utama menyebabkan tekanan di tempat kerja bagi kakitangan Kastam Jordan di peringkat pertengahan dan atasan. Bagi kakitangan peringkat pertengahan Kastam Malaysia pula, sebab utama tekanan adalah beban tugas yang berlebihan manakala bagi pegawai atasan pula tekanan adalah berpunca dari ketidakjelasan tugas.
- c) Waktu kerja yang fleksibel adalah strategi penyelesaian masalah yang digunakan oleh kakitangan kastam peringkat pertengahan dan atasan di Jordan. Di Malaysia, strategi penyelesaian masalah yang digunakan ialah melalui aktiviti dan produktiviti bagi kakitangan peringkat pertengahan dan penerimaan nilai-nilai lain bagi peringkat atasan.

Kajian ini juga telah mengenalpasti perhubungan antara angkuabah tetap dan angkuabah berubah yang digunakan dalam model. Hasil kajian mendapati perhubungan yang signifikan antara punca-punca tekanan di tempat kerja dengan tahap tekanan kerja dan strategi penyelesaian masalah yang digunakan di kedua-dua negara. Perhubungan antara perbezaan personal dengan punca-punca tekanan adalah lemah walaupun signifikan di kedua-dua negara. Sementara itu perhubungan antara perbezaan personal dengan tahap tekanan di tempat kerja serta strategi penyelesaian masalah adalah tidak signifikan di Jordan tetapi

signifikan di Malaysia.

Perhubungan antara tahap tekanan di tempat kerja dan strategi penyelesaian masalah adalah tidak signifikan di Jordan tetapi lemah walaupun signifikan di Malaysia. Perhubungan antara tahap-tahap serta punca –punca tekanan adalah signifikan di kedua-dua buah negara. Implikasi dari penemuan dan cadangan untuk kajian akan datang juga turut dibincangkan.

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APPROVAL


I certify that an examination Committee met on 9th May, 2002 to conduct the final examination of Belal Yousuf Mahmoud Barhem on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Work Stress Patterns, Sources And Coping Strategies: A Study Of Malaysian And Jordanian Customs Employees" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



(BELAL YOUSUF MAHMOUD BARHEM)

Date: 15-5-2002

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